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Agenda item 3

REVIEW OF PRIORITY THEMES

Note dated 15 May 1996 from the Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations (Vienna), addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations (Vienna), Riad Siage, has formally requested the Secretary-General to circulate, under item 3, the attached note on national and transnational crime, organized crime, economic crime, including money-laundering, and the role of criminal law in the protection of the environment.

* Reissued for technical reasons.

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Dear Sir,

I have the honour to convey to you the position of my country on agenda item 3 on national and transnational crime, organized crime, economic crime, including money-laundering, and the role of criminal law in the protection of the environment.

First: the Syrian Arab Republic rejects and condemns terrorism which is perpetrated in order to achieve criminal purposes. It allows no one to carry out such activities, using Syria as a point of departure. This is a position of principle, from which my country never deviates. Syria also considers that terrorism, in whatever form and whatever its source, is a contravention of international legitimacy and a threat to humanity and to peoples worldwide.

Syria has already expressed and emphasized its position on numerous political occasions and through regional and international organizations and conferences.

Second: on several occasions, the President of the Republic has put forward the idea of convening an international conference to identify terrorism and to distinguish between it, as an act which is both condemned and rejected, and the legitimate struggle of peoples for freedom and independence. He said, *inter alia*:

> "We condemn terrorism and we reject and resist it, because we do not want it and because we have even suffered from some such acts. However, we clearly distinguish between terrorism and acts of national resistance against occupation and we support such acts because they derive from the right of every people whose land has been occupied or whose rights have been violated, especially where they exercise this right in the actual field of their struggle".

One of the facts which emphasize the significance of such an initiative, which was presented by the Arab Group to the General Assembly, is the overwhelming support it received in a vote at the General Assembly, by the adoption of resolution 42/159 of 7 December 1987.

Third: in our view, any discussion, decision, declaration or suchlike must take into consideration the firm position of my country within the appropriate wording and in the appropriate place, expressing the conviction of the need to establish defined and generally agreed international standards which facilitate a clear distinction to be established between terrorism and the legitimate struggle of peoples for national liberation, pursuant to the General Assembly resolution referred to above, in which the General Assembly recognized, among other things, that the effectiveness of the struggle against terrorism could be enhanced by the establishment of a generally agreed definition of international terrorism and reaffirmed the inalienable right to self-determination of all peoples under colonial and racist regimes and other forms of alien domination, in particular the struggle of national liberation movements.

I hereby request that this note be circulated as an official document of your esteemed Commission.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express our highest consideration.

Ambassador Dr. Riad Siage
Deputy Permanent Representative